



# Medical Home Newsletter

## Childhood Obesity

Volume No. 7

<http://www.medhomeportal.org>

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### Welcome

The purpose of this publication is to support health care providers in the establishment and maintenance of Medical Homes for their pediatric patients by providing tools and information for use in their practices.

**To offer comments, suggest ideas for future newsletters, or to sign up for email delivery contact the Project Coordinator, Barbara Ward, RN BS [bward@utah.gov](mailto:bward@utah.gov).**

Copies of newsletters may be found on the Utah Medical Home web portal: <http://www.medhomeportal.org> (click on Newsletters/Conf. Calls)



### The motor is inside playing video games

#### Obesity in Children Defined

The Centers for Disease Control uses the term “overweight”, rather than obesity, in child and adolescent populations and classifies overweight according to two levels: 1) “at risk for overweight”, corresponding to a body mass index (BMI) between the 85<sup>th</sup> to 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles, and 2) “overweight” corresponding to a BMI greater than the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile. The percentage of children who are at risk of becoming overweight or are overweight is reported to be 20.6 % for 2-5 year-olds, 30.3% for 6-11yo, and 30.4% of adolescents 12-19 years old. Genes alone cannot account for the increase in overweight kids in the last 10-20 years. Eating more and moving less are the main culprits. For a profile of Utah demographics go to [www.ActionForHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org).

Today's youth are the most inactive generation in history, caused in part by reductions in school physical education programs, unavailable or unsafe community recreational facilities, and the prevalence of video games and TV. Diabetes, hypertension and other obesity-related chronic diseases that are prevalent among adults have now become more common in children and adolescents. More devastating to the overweight child is the social discrimination affecting self-esteem and contributing to depression.

### So what's a Medical Home to do?

This newsletter will focus on resources and practical suggestions rather than cause and effects of obesity.

**In general:** Some suggestions from the AAP Policy statement *Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity* (Pediatrics Vol.112 no.2 August 2003) and UDOH Bureau of Health Promotion.

- Focus on prevention and identifying at-risk children by following the child's BMI at every visit and document on BMI growth chart.
- Bookmark on every office computer a BMI calculator site for easy determination (*see Resources below*).
- Incorporate assessment of weight and physical activity into routine clinical practice.
- Children should have 1-2 hours per day of age-appropriate active play.
- AVOID USING THE E (exercise) WORD
- Suggest they reduce inactivity rather than increase activity (more effective)
- Promote the “walking school bus” (the family living farthest from the school starts out walking and picks up children along the way until they get to school).  
<http://www.walkingbus.com/>
- Advise parents on how to limit TV and video games. (*See Resources for active video games*)
- Encourage children's autonomy in self-regulation of food intake. Kids need to develop their own cues for hunger and feeling full.
- Emphasize healthful eating choices rather than **restrictive** eating patterns.
- Encourage family meals (absence of family meals is associated with lower fruit and vegetable consumption as well as consumption of more fried food).
- Encourage water as a beverage, milk at meals and soda, juice etc. as a special treat.
- Have posters of appropriate portion sizes in office or waiting room (*see Resources*).
- Know about school and community-based resources that support healthy lifestyles. (*See Resources for suggestions*)
- Suggest that parents investigate their local school for amount of PE, type of foods in vending machines, what is served for school lunch, and advocate for change.
- Have a list of ideas for families readily available (*see below*).

## Treatment

While no single approach to treatment of childhood overweight has been demonstrated to be consistently effective, a number of recommendations have been made by expert panels. Obesity represents a chronic disease requiring frequent visits; continuous monitoring, and ongoing reinforcement for success. Referral to a specialist or program is suggested if your practice is too busy to allow for close monitoring. See “Tips for Parents” below for suggestions.

The following are recommendations from:

1. Barlow and Dietz *Obesity Evaluation and Treatment: Expert Committee Recommendations* *Pediatrics* 1998;102-29
2. Fowler-Brown and Kahwati *Prevention and Treatment of Overweight in children and Adolescents* *American Family Physician* vol69, number 11 June 2004.

- Interventions should begin early but not before age 2
- For kids 2-7 years who are at risk or overweight the goal should be weight maintenance, not weight loss.
- For overweight children over age 7, the goal should be weight loss.
- Target and involve the whole family (to impact on the child, the family must be ready to change).
- The program should help the family make **small, gradual** changes with the goal of implementing permanent changes. Suggest one or two changes at a time. This helps prevent the family from feeling overwhelmed and quitting.
- Teach the family to monitor eating and activity. (See *Resources for food and activity trackers*).
- Develop a schedule of monitoring (as often as weekly) to provide support and to maintain focus on the goal of re-shaping lifestyles.
- Encourage and empathize, but don't place blame.
- Refer for a complete nutrition assessment. (Ask your hospital dietician if she/he can provide this service)
- There are no approved pharmaceutical treatments for children.
- If medically urgent, bariatric surgery for adolescents who meet criteria is available at U of U, Salt Lake Regional, St. Marks and Cottonwood.
- Refer to a specialist or an organized program when appropriate. (see *resources*).

## Some Ideas for Parents

A more complete handout is available in the newsletter section of [www.medhomeportal.org](http://www.medhomeportal.org)  
**Eating**

- Eat meals together (teaches and models smart eating habits)
- Eat at a table, with TV off, and make it a pleasant time.
- Let kids help themselves to food. Adults tend to dish out bigger serving sizes and expect kids to clean their plates. Kids need to develop their own cues for hunger and feeling full.
- Cover half the plate with veggies and fruit.

- Open and close kitchen. Open for meals only (green sign at the door) closed at other times (red sign at the door)
- Involve the kids in planning meals and preparing them (school lunches).
- Reward kids with praise and time together not food. Don't use food as a punishment or reward.
- Increase access to fruits and veggies by preparing ahead of time.
- Bottom shelf of refrigerator becomes anytime anywhere foods. Already prepared veggies and fruits stored there.

## Activities

- Be more active. Take 10 minutes to play Frisbee, walk to the park and/or shoot hoops.
- Limit TV and video time. Consider adding a dance video game to your system without restriction of time played. (see *Resources*)
- Buy birthday and holiday presents that promote movement, such as roller skates, Frisbees, etc.
- Find activities in your community, such as hiking trails, swimming pools, skating rinks.
- Set family goals (walk three times a week), write them down, and track progress.
- Special weekend activities, such as flying kites, playing tennis.
- Each family member wears a pedometer and strives for 10,000 steps per day.
- Individualize activity to your child. Some kids enjoy team sports and some enjoy solitary activity.
- Plan parties and vacations around movement and play. Swimming party instead of a movie.
- Start family home evening with a physical activity.
- Ask the school for a “safe routes” map.
- Start a “Walking School bus”.
- Family members participate in “Five a Day Challenge.” Winner of the week chooses the family activity for the week.

[http://www.dole5aday.com/Kids/K\\_Index.jsp](http://www.dole5aday.com/Kids/K_Index.jsp)

## Resources

**Video Games** (you read that correctly) The following games are physically active and offer fun, competition, choreography, and a great workout:

**Playstation** offers several dance games (Dance Dance Revolution). Add the Dance Pad to the system and it tracks the players' movements.

**Nintendo Gamecube** offers MC Groovz Dance Craze that includes the dance pad.

**Microsoft XBOX** offers Dance Dance Revolution ULTRAMIX. Can purchase a controller not included.

## Exercise guidelines for children

[http://www.hearthighway.org/physical\\_activity/guidelines/guidelines\\_for\\_children\\_0-6.htm](http://www.hearthighway.org/physical_activity/guidelines/guidelines_for_children_0-6.htm)

**Bright Futures** has publications on childhood nutrition and physical activity to download from their healthcare professional section (tools and resources)

<http://brightfutures.aap.org/web/>

## Classes and Programs

**Family Food Fitness** class meets weekly for six weeks and teaches nutrition and behavioral changes. Currently offered at PCMC, Utah Valley Regional Medical Center, and McDee Hospital for \$150 (scholarships available). All IHC hospitals in the state will offer this class later in 2005. 588-2659

### **PCMC Medical Nutrition Counseling**

801-588-2700 for appointment.

**Nutrition Question Hotline** 801-588-3594

**National Youth Sports Programs (NYSP)** is a five-week free summer program targeting underserved kids ages 10 to 16. The kids receive free lunch, snacks, t-shirts, transportation to and from the program and all instruction in sport classes, education classes, drug and alcohol awareness classes and dance. The program also does free physical exams, including eyes and dental. For an application to the U of U summer program and more information. 801-581-8379 <http://www.health.utah.edu/outreach/nysp/>

**Weight Watchers** can serve youth 10-17 years old in their regular program (modified for children) with a doctor's note. There are meetings available in all of Utah or join their online program for \$5 a week. Call for a meeting location near you and prices, 801-486-0125 or go to their website [www.weightwatchers.com](http://www.weightwatchers.com)

**Jenny Craig** offers a comprehensive program that focuses on Food, Body and Mind for adolescents 13-17years-old. A twelve month program is \$98. For a program close to the family call 1-800 jenny20 or their website [www.jennycraig.com](http://www.jennycraig.com)

## Trackers

**FREE Check your Health** Nutrition and Activity Tracker, available at your local Dan's and Jubilee grocery stores. You may also order a FREE Tracker via [www.checkyourhealth.org](http://www.checkyourhealth.org) or at 1-888-222-2542.

**Utah Walks** You can track your miles of walking or any other form of exercise by logging on to [www.UtahWalks.org](http://www.UtahWalks.org). Join a group or individually.

**The Lean Plate Club** is about eating smart, moving more throughout the day and setting realistic goals to achieve a healthy weight. Has food and activity trackers. [www.washingtonpost.com/leanplateclub](http://www.washingtonpost.com/leanplateclub)

**National Institutes of Health** For diaries and trackers, BMI calculators, recipes [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose\\_wt/diary.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/diary.htm)

**BMI growth charts** [www.cdc.gov/growthcharts](http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts)  
**BMI calculator**

<http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/bmicalc.htm>

**Camps** There are no weight loss camps in Utah for children. To find a USA camp go to this URL. <http://www.tipsontripsandcamps.com/>

**The National Academy of Fitness** is a private school in St. George for girls 12-18 that focuses on weight loss and healthy weight management. 888-577-1155 [www.nafkids.com](http://www.nafkids.com)

## Posters, Tip Sheets, Brochures and General Information

**Check your Health** has a poster of portion sizes and a parent tip handout. They also have nutrition information, easy exercises, check-up guides, healthy snacks for kids, and packets to get people started and a hotline. 800-222-2542. [www.checkyourhealth.org](http://www.checkyourhealth.org)

**Baylor College** and USDA teamed up with an excellent website that provides newsletters, posters of portion sizes, reading nutrition labels and an exercise poster.

A great site for children. <http://www.kidsnutrition.org/>

**Kidnetics** is an educational outreach program that promotes healthy eating and physical activity for kids and their families and is an excellent site for children. <http://www.kidnetic.com/>

**Shape up America** is an excellent resource for families to get started. Has a tip sheet of 99 suggestions for family activities among other things. 240 631-6533 <http://www.shapeup.org/>

**National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Disease** has 35 publications on weight management, nutrition and activity for all ages and abilities downloadable or order free copies at: 1-877-946-4627 <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/index.htm>

## Physical Activities for the Disabled

**County Parks and Recreation Centers** offer Adaptive programs for individuals with special needs but everyone is welcome. Contact your local county office.

**UFIT** University of Utah for special needs kids is a Physical Activity Program that is family centered and non-competitive. 801-587-9713 <http://www.health.utah.edu/outreach/ufit.html>

**National Ability Center** The National Ability Center offers recreational activities for the family and has satellite sites around the state. 435-649-3991 <http://www.nac1985.org/>

**SPLORE** Provides accessible and affordable outdoor activities for people with special needs. 801- 484-4128 <http://alt.xmission.com/~splore/index.htm>

## Community Resources

Community programs should target the whole population and not single out the obese, particularly in the school setting. Check with your local Parks and Recreation departments and your school district lifelong learning centers for a list of their programs.

**The Gold Medal School Initiative (GMSI)** reaches 65,639 children in 138 schools across Utah.

[http://www.hearthighway.org/school\\_information/gold\\_medal\\_school\\_initiative/gmsi\\_main.htm](http://www.hearthighway.org/school_information/gold_medal_school_initiative/gmsi_main.htm)

**Trails in Utah** have been built and maintained for use by everyone. For maps and trails go to [www.utahwalks.org](http://www.utahwalks.org)

**Gold Medal Miles**, Legacy Gold Medal Miles are one-mile walks designed to encourage Utahns to become more physically active. Maps can be found at [www.utahwalks.org](http://www.utahwalks.org)